

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this Application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on February 3, 2004. Claims 6-16 are pending and stand rejected in this Application. Claims 13 and 14 have been objected to, but would be allowed if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The indication of allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. Claims 6, 12, 15, and 16 are amended and Claims 8, 9, 13, and 14 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer by this Amendment.

In view of the allowable subject matter of Claim 13, Claim 6 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 8 and 13. Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are now in conditions for allowance.

The specification was objected to because of several informalities. Applicants note with appreciation the time taken by the Examiner to identify specific areas needing revisions. Applicants have herein submitted replacement to several paragraphs in the specification to correct the outstanding informalities and respectfully request reconsideration of the same. If, however, the Examiner finds additional corrections needed, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive a mutually acceptable Examiner's amendment.

Claims 6-16 were objected to because of an informality. Applicants have amended Claim 6, including correction of the cited informality, and respectfully request reconsideration of the objection thereto. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, he is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive mutually acceptable language.

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Claims 6-9, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneiter (U.S. Patent No. 4,890,860, hereinafter “Schneiter”). Claims 6, 7, 10, 11, 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Avory et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,648,634, hereinafter “Avory”) in view of Nilsson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,734,265, hereinafter “Nilsson”) and Schneiter.

In view of the allowable subject matter of Claim 13 and the present amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-noted outstanding obviousness rejections are now moot. Their withdrawal is respectfully requested.

The proposed amendments to Claims 6, 12, 15, and 16 above should be entered by the Examiner because the amendments are supported by the as-filed specification and drawings, do not add any new matter to this Application, and place this Application in condition for allowance in view of the allowable subject matter of Claim 13. Further, the amendments do not raise new issues or require a further search.

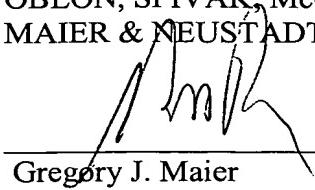
Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 6, 7, 10-12, 15, and 16 is earnestly solicited.

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Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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